

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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SUBJECT: OPENING OF BOT-ZAM ROAD

1. FOLLOWING IS PROPOSED TEXT OF AMBASSADOR S REMARKS AT
OFFICIAL OPENING OF BOT-ZAM ROAD JANUARY 20

2. QTE THIS IS AN HISTORIC DAY MARKED BY INAUGURATIONS IN
BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND BOTSWANA. HERE WE HAVE GATHERED TO
MARK THE CONCLUSION OF THIS IMPORTANT ROAD LINK KNOWN AS THE
BOT-ZAM HIGHWAY AND TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO MADE IT
POSSIBLE.

3. QTE IN CELEBRATING THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF OPENING A
HISTORIC NORTH-SOUTH LINK ACROSS BOTSWANA, WE SHOULD TAKE A
MOMENT TO REVIEW SOME OF THE MILESTONES ON THE WAY TO THIS
ACHIEVEMENT. VIEWED IN BROADEST PERSPECTIVE, THE BOT-ZAM ROAD
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, FIRST OF ALL, AS PART OF THE STEADY MARCH
OF ALL PEOPLES TOWARD CLOSER TIES AND OF TH INEVITABLE MOMENTUM
TOWARD GREATER INTERDEPENDENCE.

4. QTE THE TRACES OF THE BOT-ZAM HIGHWAY DATE BACK TO THE
EARLY 1800S WHEN MISSIONARIES AND TRADERS ESTABLISHED THE FIRST
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TRACKS BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND ZAMBIA. GOING NORTH FROM FRANCISTOWN
THE TRACK WAS KNOWN AS PANDAMATENGA OR HUNTERS ROAD. IN SUCCEEDING
YEARS, PARTICULARLY IN THE 1960S WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF
INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRIES IN THIS AREA, THE NEED FOR AN ALL-
WEATHER ROAD BECAME STEADILY MORE APPARENT.

5. QTE BY 1967, THE IDEA TOOK SHAPE STIMULATED BY FAR-SEEING

STATESMEN AND N ENGINEERS WHO ANTICIPATED THE GROWING NEED FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING TRACKS BY A ROAD FROM NATA TO THE ZAMBESI RIVER. BY 1970, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TOOK AN

ESSENTIAL FIRST STEP TOWARD COOPERATION WITH BOTSWANA THAT LED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT THAT WE INAUGURATE TODAY. IT WAS IN THAT YEAR 1970, THAT THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREED TO FINANCE A TRANSPOTATION STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF THEBOT-ZAM ROAD.

6. QTE A MAJOR MILESTONE WAS REACHED ON AUGUST 31, 1972, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA AND USAID SIGNED A LOAN AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR THE SUPERVISION AND CONTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, 1973, SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA AND THE FIRM OF TIPPETS-ABBET-MCCARTHY-STRATTON, BETTER KNOWN AS TAMS, TO PROVIDE THE SUPERVISORY ENGINEERING SERVICES, AND THE AGREEMENT WITH GROVE INTERNATIONAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD. I KNOW I SPEAK FOR ALL IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS.

7. QTE AS WORLD EVENTS UNFOLDED, THE BOT-ZAM ROAD TOOK ON ENHANCED IMPORTANCE. IN THE SUMMER OF 1976, THE PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA, HIS EXCELLENCY SIR SERETSE KHAMA, MEETING IN WASHINGTON WITH PRESIDENT FORD, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE BOT- ZAM ROAD TOGETHER THEY AGREED THAT IT REPRESENTED AN ESSENTIAL LINK IN BOTSWANA S LIFELINE. THE PRESIDENT AND PEOPLE OF BOTSWANA HAVE ALWAYS HIGHLY VALUED THIS ROAD AS A MEANS OF AFFIRMING THE UNITY OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS COUNTRY, AS WELL AS PROVIDING FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTSWANA S GROWING EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES AND SERVING AS A STIMULUS TO COMMERCE AND TOURISM. ONE CAN ALSO SAY WITH ASSURANCE THAT BOTSWANA HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE COUNTRIES THAT ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL TIES AND COOPERATION.

8. QTE BY ITSPARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT IT SHARES THIS CONCERN FOR ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT ROUTES AS AMONG THE MOST CRITICAL NEEDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTSWANA. TRAVEL BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND ZAMBIA HAS BEEN IMPEDED FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF AN ALL-WEATHER ROAD. THIS 300 - KILOMETER ROAD NOW LINKS BOTSWANA S GROWING INDUSTRIAL SITES WITH NEW MARKETS TO THE NORTH, AS WELL AS PROVIDING A NEW ROUTE FOR THE IMPORTATION OF NEEDED MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS FROM ZAMBIA.

9. QTE IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE STATESMEN AND BUILDERS WHO MADE THIS DAY POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT WE

BEGIN BY THANKING THE PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA, HIS GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE. THEIR COOPERATION AND HOSPITALITY, THEIR EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY AND RACIAL HARMONY, HAVE PROVIDED THE INDISPENSABLE WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT MADE POSSIBLE THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THIS PROJECT. IT IS AN EXAMPLE THAT, IN NO SMALL MEASURE, UNDERLIES THE CONTINUING DESIRE OF THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER NATIONS TO ASSIST BOTSWANA AND ENABLE IT TO REMAIN TRUE TO IDEALS AND TRADITIONS.

10. QTE WE ALSO PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE DEDICATION HAS HELPED TO SURMOUNT THE STUBBORN OBSTACLES WITH WHICH NATURE CONFRONTED THEM DURING THIS PROJECT.

11. QTE IN CONCLUSION, WE CAN ALL TAKE PRIDE IN THIS ACHIEVEMENT, MARKED AS IT IS BY MANY IMPORTANT MILESTONES IN THE LONG JOURNEY FROM CONCEPTION TO COMPLETION AND NOW, ON JANUARY 20, 1977, TO INAUGURATION OF THE BOT-ZAM ROAD. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT
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THE ROAD ITSELF WILL STAND AS A HISTORIC MILESTONE AND LASTING MONUMENT TO COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THEIR JOINT EFFORTS TO EXPAND SUCH COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING IN THE REGION AND THE WORLD UNQTE.

12. REVISIONS/CONCURRENCE REQUESTED ASAP.
ALBERTI

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